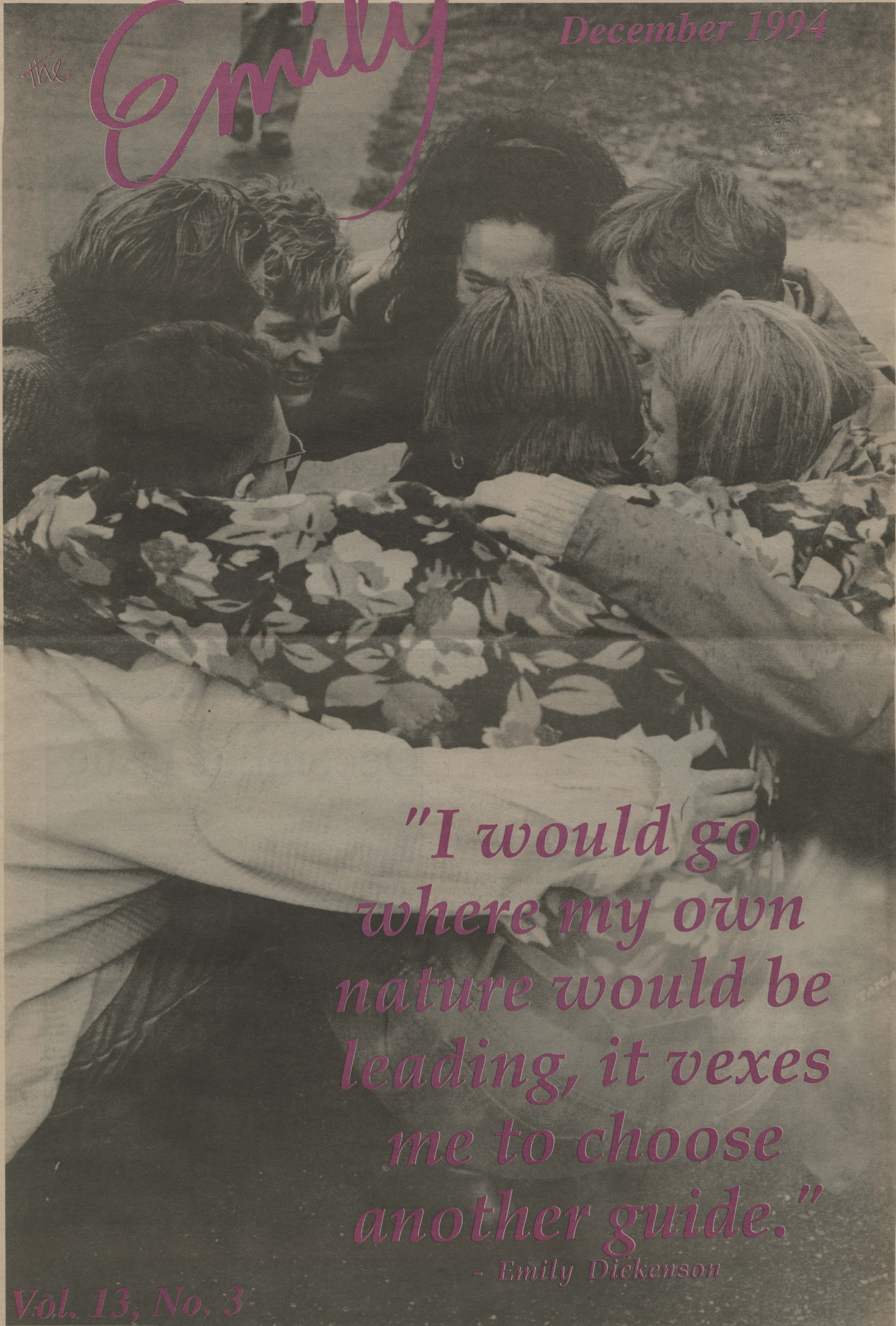


ARC
HQ 1101
E4
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the Emily

December 1994



*"I would go
where my own
nature would be
leading, it vexes
me to choose
another guide."*

- Emily Dickenson

Vol. 13, No. 3

UNIVERSITY
50
VICTORIA

The Emily Wants You!



Our next issue comes out in early January. It will celebrate the Fine Arts.

Graphics, poetry, fiction, articles, ideas, energy or interest are anxiously awaited. We meet every Tuesday at 12:30 in the Women's Centre. Submissions can be brought to meetings or dropped off at the Women's Centre by January 9, 1995. No skills necessary.

December Issue

Amal Ishaque Rana
Ana Torres
Anonymous
Cheryl Harrison
Christie Shaw
Ellen Travis
Jacqueline Crummey
Jen Saunders
Kerry Jo Finney

Kira Burgess
Kirsty Dickson
L. de la Vega
Melissa Svendsen
Naomi North
Nicole Little
Sarah McCoubrey
Shelley Marie Motz

The Emily Letters Policy

The Emily accepts all letters written by women which are not racist, sexist or homophobic. Please drop all submissions for the Emily in the UVic Women's Centre.

Dear Wymyn:

I take umbrage at the editorial stance of politically correct hirsutism put forth in *Emily* 1994, 13 (2), 2. My underarms are shaven, as are my legs - and my pussy, the smoothest of all! My nipples are not pierced, but my labia sway with a 10 ga. barbell. I am beautiful! *Emily* seems obsessed with in-your-face outrage. I much prefer loving my wymyn in the privacy of my own life to boasting to the world how unkempt I can be.

Sign me,
Mary Labrys

The UVic Women's Centre is for all women. It is a space for you to relax, eat your lunch, hang out, use the library, or to get involved politically.

Please answer this survey and return it to the suggestion box in the centre (S.U.B. 146, across from the Cinnecenta).

1. Do you use the Women's Centre? Yes No
If yes, what for?
If no, why not?
2. How did you find out about the Women's Centre?
3. Do you think meetings and events organized through the Women's Centre are well advertised on campus?
4. What can you suggest to make the Women's Centre more accessible and welcoming?

Thanx for your time,
The Collective

1 in 10 ♀ in Canada is assaulted by her husband

A SYMBOL OF VIOLENCE

by Shelley Marie Motz

When we speak of the Montreal massacre - the murder of fourteen women at Ecole Polytechnique on Dec. 6th, 1989 - we speak of fourteen victims.

But one woman urges us to remember that there were twenty-seven victims if we consider those women who were injured yet survived. She also expects us to realize that there were countless victims if we consider how the massacre impacted other lives.

She tells us that, one year after the massacre, one man committed suicide because he had not attempted to help the women who were his peers. This man's parents committed suicide a year after his death because they could not live with their grief.

The woman I am referring to is Suzanne Laplant Edward. Her daughter, Anne Marie Edward, was one of the women murdered.

Suzanne has dedicated herself tirelessly to reminding everyone of the losses generated by the gesture of the male assassin. Since 1991, Suzanne has organized a Dec. 6th choral presentation. She also founded and initially administered the Dec. 6 Victims Foundation. Currently, she is actively involved with the fight for stricter gun control. She came to UVic on Nov. 18 and spoke to an audience of approximately 50 people.

She is irate that society has heroized the assassin while the victims have remained faceless and anonymous statistics. She seeks to rectify the insult done to these women by speaking about their lives. She perceives it as her responsibility to put faces to the victims and bring the reality of their lives and deaths into the gun control debate.

These are the women whose deaths we remember and mourn each year on Dec. 6th.

Genevieve Bergeron died embracing Anne Marie Edward as they attempted to hide from the murderer. They were the last two bodies found. Genevieve was a soprano who sang with a professional choir and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Her stepmother claimed she was "all the love in the world in one single person."

Maud Haviernick was giving an end of term presentation when she was shot. She was pursuing her masters degree and is remembered for her thirst for learning and her drive for success. She possessed boundless energy and her sister claims she "sensed

perhaps that there was so much to accomplish in so little time."

Maryse Laganieve was not a student but a secretary. Three months prior to her death she had married and was dreaming of beginning a family. Her husband believes she may have been pregnant at the time of her death but did not wish to have this suspicion verified by the autopsy. She is described as a gentle, patient woman who was attentive to others and preferred solitude to crowds.

Barbara Daigneault was in her last year of an undergraduate program. Engineering was a family profession and she was working as a T.A. for her father, an engineering professor who was extremely proud of her.

Barbara Klueznick and her husband had emigrated to Canada from Poland prior to the opening of the Iron Curtain. They were in search of freedom and liberty. Barbara already had an engineering degree. Her husband had been a doctor in Poland. They were pursuing Canadian degrees. Barbara had just decided to switch to a nursing program so that she could work with her husband if he got a post in a rural community. She was incredibly spiritual and intellectual and was sending money back to Poland in order to assist her parents and her brother. Suzanne Laplant Edward thinks the story of Barbara is particularly tragic because she "didn't realize that where there is freedom, freedom is often abused."

Helen Colgan is characterized by her mother as "a woman of passion, a politician in her bones...Helen would have fought hard to change the world had she been given a chance."

Natalie Croteau was a humorous and tenacious woman who dreamed of owning a sailboat. After her death, the following entry was found in her diary. "Keep for yourself a summit to reach, then you will know why you exist."

Sonia Pelletier's sister's words capture all of the anguish of the massacre. "I want to erase this hideous hatred and keep you intact in my heart."

Michele Richard was also giving an end of term presentation when she died. She was an extremely determined woman who had been a corporal and a cadet. She played the flute, the trumpet and the organ. She also helped found an organization which assisted youth in distress.

Maryse LeClair was an incredibly tenacious woman

who was determined to be an astronaut. She saw an engineering degree as a stepping stone toward this goal. Her father is an RCMP officer who tragically discovered his daughter's corpse.

Annie St.Arneault had diverse interests. She was a member of the 4-H club. Played the flute and participated in many theatre productions. She was engaged to be wed and planned to get married in Africa where her brother, who is a missionary priest, would bless the union. Her mother states "You left with a part of me."

Anne Marie Lemay was spirited and refused to be undermined.

At age seven she cried, "What do you mean I can't be a pope? I'm a person." Another time, she was told she could not go swimming because she'd just eaten. She walked away and returned a few moments later with a placard that said, "I protest." Reportedly her protests were never more violent. As a teenager, she was the first woman to work at a local auto repair shop. Her parents claim, "She has been our sunshine, now she is our shining star."

Annie Turcotte was the youngest woman murdered. She is remembered as "exuberant, honest, passionate, philosophical, intelligent, athletic..."

Anne-Marie Edward was athletic and enjoyed camping, rock climbing and kayaking. She was proud because she had just made the university ski team. Since her family shared her pride at this accomplishment, they buried her in her team jacket. She was a gifted musician and played the piano and the classical guitar. She was also fluent in four languages and enjoyed horse back riding. Her dream was to buy a farm so that she could keep her own horse. Her mother finds the "thought of Anne-Marie riding Chrystal along sandy beaches is a comforting thought."

Suzanne Laplant Edward is determined to bring these stories to the attention of people involved in the debate surrounding gun control. She reports that she took a family portrait to a lecture. There are 86 members in her immediate family. She wanted to put her daughter's death into perspective, to illuminate that the one death which forms a statistic impacts many other lives. A man in the audience reportedly responded, "I think it's unfair of you to bring victims into the gun debate..."

Regarding gun control,

Stone Circle

I cast this circle
of 14 stones,
a prayer to the Goddess,
a sacred space
safe from outer harm.
Each stone for a sister slain
Each ribbon for a sister's pain.
Ruthless force
stole their precious breath,
crumpled, defeated they lay,
each body framed in crimson red.
In this circle I fill with tears,
this coven empty,
14 deaths were real.

Nicole Little

Suzanne thinks that Kim Campbell did attempt to initiate stricter gun control but did not have the support of her caucus or Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. However, in the current round of debates, Prime Minister Chretien and Minister of Justice, Allan Rock, are urging stricter gun regulations particularly regarding safe storage laws and registration laws.

The weapon used to massacre the 14 women at Ecole Polytechnique was a mini-gruber 14 - an assault weapon. However, in Canada, it is currently classified as a non-restricted gun and is available to all people with collections. The term "collector" is problematic. Suzanne states that at a recent proceeding a woman was asked to define a collector. She stated it is an individual with at least one gun "since one

must start somewhere."

Suzanne emphasizes that only 7% of Canadians own guns yet this 7% successfully swayed the public agenda in their favour because other Canadians have not been as vocal on the issue. She reminds us that one telephone call to an MP represents 329 phone calls and one letter equals 3290 votes. She urges us to contact our MPs and the Prime Minister to enforce stricter gun control in Canada.

Dec. 6th is a symbol of violence against women. Through her political involvement, Suzanne has come to "understand power in its essence." She has also become increasingly aware of how everything is intertwined. The Montreal massacre was not the isolated incident which many people would like us to believe it is. ♀

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Ecole Polytechnique December 6, 1989

December 6th Events

11:30 - 12:30 Memorial Vigil Outside MaClaurin (Pyramid)

1:00-3:00 Open House in SUB Upper Lounge (For Women and Men)

9:00 to 5:00 Interfaith Chapel will be open for meditation and reflection.

The Women's Centre will be open for any Women who wish to Reflect, Talk or just Sit for awhile.

We honour these women and reaffirm our commitment to end the violence against women.

Silence is Violence

Lesbian Porn Unerotic?

by Kirsty Dickson

"Pornography" means the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures and/or words, including by electronic or other data retrieval systems, that also includes one or more of the following: Women are presented dehumanized as sexual objects, things, or commodities... Women's body parts - including but not limited to vaginas, breasts, or buttocks - are exhibited such that women are reduced to those parts" - excerpt from Model Antipornography Civil Rights Ordinance (Mackinnon & Andrea Dworkin, 1981).

"Are we reclaiming or recreating harmful images? Can lesbians create and define an erotica which is unique...?"

Who says that lesbians can't produce erotica and pornography? Upon entering Everywomen's bookstore, one can find an array of erotic magazines catering to the many tastes of the lesbian community. Titles such as Lezzie Smut, Deneuve, On our Backs, and most recently, Girlfriends, reveal a growing trend in the making of porn by women for women. The response, however, has been mixed.

I have spoken to women who are proud that women

and lesbians are "taking back" images which have been used in the past and present exploitation of women in men's magazines, and also to those women who believe we are not reclaiming anything, but merely recreating male stereotypes and images of women.

Herein lies the problem: Are we reclaiming or recreating harmful images? Can lesbians create and define an erotica which is unique, a medium which is not reusing patriarchal stereotypes?

Pornography (defined by Webster's dictionary as the "writing of harlots") is an intriguing topic. It brings to mind images of women in bizarre poses with bought-and-paid-for breasts almost bursting out of scant cleavage. No subtleties at all to be found in half open mouths, shiny tongues and spread legs: the pandering of traditional boy-toy stereotypes.

What bothers me the most about pornography, though, is not the ridiculous posing, or even the frustration and empathy I feel for women who make their living from men who exploit and market women's bodies. What fills me with rage is the after-image. The effect of these images resulting in complacency towards the objectification of women and our sexuality. We are not active subjects in erotic and pornographic material, we are portrayed as objects. Men's magazines give as much respect and regard towards women as they would pieces of furniture.

This objectification is further carried by images which display only parts of women's bodies. Headless photos of legs, breasts, and crotches scream out the message that even if women are

the sum of these parts, it is only the parts that really matter. Parts become the symbols of desire, the women they are a part of become lost and left behind in the expression of female sexuality.

Popular pornography has largely been developed for a male audience, an audience which responds to such blatant devices as in-your-face nudity, and cheap lingerie, an audience which can get its thrills from peeler bars or the local strip joint to get turned on. Obviously, pornography for men only needs to be simple

"Women are not objects or things: we are sexually powerful beings."

and to the point: Blatant and obvious. Imagine my surprise, then, when I find the same cheap ploys and thrill devices in On Our Backs and Girlfriends magazines, poses identical to any men's magazines, right down to the centrefolds. A photo of a long-haired woman leaning back on a motorcycle completely nude except for spike heels. An adolescent-looking centrefold lounging on a bed with rollerskates on, smiling into the camera; a woman in garters vacantly staring ahead, her hand spreading open her vagina for a closer camera view. I cannot and will not attempt to speak for every woman's ideas on the subject of pornography, but for myself, these images were all images I have seen many times before. They seemed exactly the same: they seemed to be made for men.

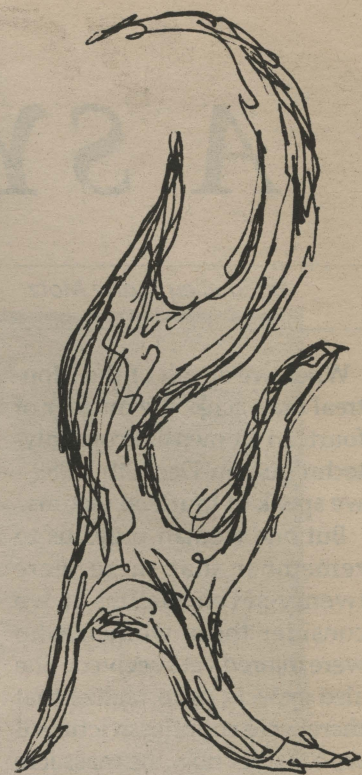
My first reaction was one of contempt for women's magazines that assume

women find this formula erotic but I find it degrading to myself and other women. Women copying men's ideas of erotica and pornography is trivializing because it propagates the ways in which men have portrayed women, not how we as women see ourselves. Women's sexuality is not simple. It does not always need to be obvious.

Audre Lorde's statement, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" is very telling in this context: we cannot dismantle the harmful implications of pornography while using the same tools and devices in creating our own. Besides, if Playboy and Penthouse are typical examples of a male view on women's sexuality, I want nothing to do with it. Not only is it unimaginative, it is quite simply boring.

Women, we can do much better than this. Let's show the mystery and subtleties of our passion, the varying shades of longing, the emotion I do not think that merely cleavage and tight leather are going to allow women to forge ahead into new forms of erotica. Portrayals of the many ways in which we can love each other can be expressed without using the images created for men's sexual pleasure and the further subjugation of women.

Women are not objects or things: we are sexually powerful beings. I want to see images of women that portray us in a personalizing, sexually powerful way, not images that cater to male voyeurism, but images that reveal our spirits, our respect for women, and passion caught at the moment. On Our Backs and Girlfriends have these images too but they are few and far between. ♀



ouch!

I cut myself once, twice

I cut her and she cut me

And we are three and four and five and ...

I cut myself off.

Travelling

I was on the way, on the way

I lay there, on the way

for a long time

Thinking

I was moving

until I stopped

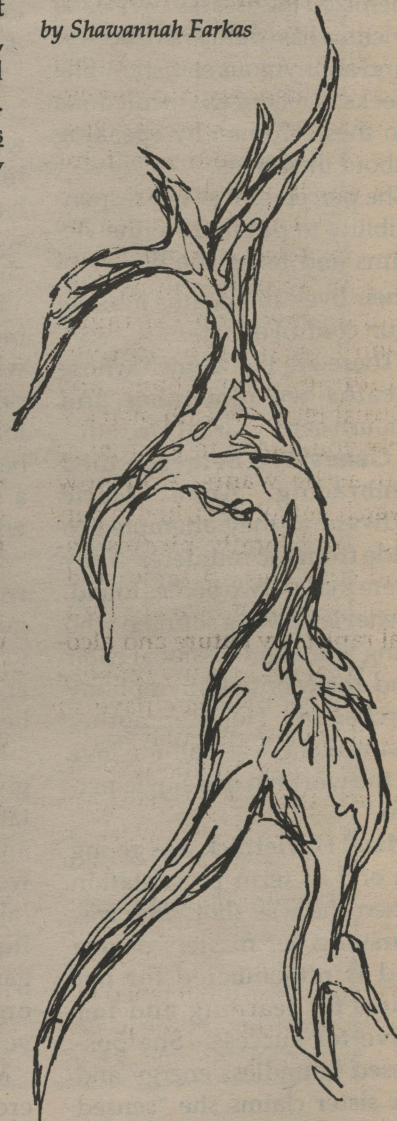
until I left

to go home

where I have always been

and where I was when I started.

by Shawannah Farkas



One Stop Feminist Shopping Everywoman's Books

635 Johnson St.

Mon - Sat 10:30 - 5:30

-erotic novels
-womanist issues
-buttons, posters, calenders,
jewelry, day-books and
much more!

Run by a volunteer feminist collective

if more people were screaming

WOMEN SPEAK OUT

This article was previously published in *Kinesis*.

Cheryl Harrison

On March 11, 100 women and a few men gathered at the University of Victoria (UVIC) to share experiences, information and analysis about the climate of harassment that exists for women at Canadian universities. The day long speak-out was organized generally as a forum for accumulating an historical understanding of the technology of silence being developed at lofty educational institutions, and specifically as a strategy session for the women gathered there.

Currently at UVIC, feminism is being maligned as "sexist fundamentalism," and women demanding an end to harassment and sexism are be-

ing lashed back into silence. Ten scheduled speakers, along with many women who spoke at the open mike, offered analysis on how sexual harassment functions at campuses in BC, how the backlash against women speaking out functions, and how the backlash can be subverted.

Catherine Snowden, from the Women's Centre at Simon Fraser University, outlined difficulties women face as students at institutions: where date rape, sexual assault and harassment are daily occurrences.

Janine Watson, from the UVIC Faculty of Law, presented her research on the gap that exists between "the policy of law and the reality of what the law provides" in the way of protection for women from

harassment. According to Watson, claims based on harassment resulting from hostile environments do not find easy recourse under the law, which prefers to view harassment in terms of sexual misconduct, rather than sexual behavior.

Sandra Hoenle described threatening letters sent to women in the Counseling Psychology department of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, and the unwillingness of the administration to investigate, let alone curb, sexist violence. The lack of legislation addressing sexism, Watson says, underpins the consistent tolerance of misogyny at Canadian universities.

At the Speak Out in March, Constance Backhouse, (Professor of Law from the University of Western Ontario) described the clamor that followed the release of the Climate Report as typical of the response of universities across Canada to calls for the elimination of systemic discrimination. Backhouse asserted that each time women attempt to initiate change, resistance and backlash follow a consistent and specific pattern.

Backhouse described how characteristically cautious reports, focusing on institutional sexism (not individual acts of harassment), like the one written by the women at UVIC, are ironically responded to by "howls of outrage from those who deem themselves falsely accused." These reports are then labeled libelous. The names of the women whose experiences are described therein and to which confidentiality was guaranteed by the researchers are demanded. And, as at UVIC, male academics then simultaneously perform usual patriarchal reversals, that is, by representing themselves as the real victims of sexual harassment. Backhouse says, when university administrations realize that the matter will not simply blow over, they formulate a public response, framed in terms of diffusing the situation rather than addressing the issue of systemic discrimination. They don the guise of neutrality and commission so-called 'objective' reviews. Here Backhouse paused, saying that the Berger/Bilson Review commission by UVIC president David Strong, deserves careful scrutiny because it moves beyond the typical call for "mutual respect and civilized discourse," and seeks to set up a framework for future discussion of climate issues, "a framework that condemns women to another eternity of skating on thin ice."

Berger and Bilson warn of the 'dangers' inherent to such terms as "sexism," "racism,"

and "harassment". They say women should be allowed to describe their experiences collectively "so long as individual character and reputation are not thereby compromised." Damning complaints, they say, "should be made through a complaint procedure with procedural safeguards for both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is directed." Such a procedure does not exist at UVIC.

At the close of the Speak Out, a surprise, melodic visit by the Raging Grannies kicked off a march. Sixty pissed-off, placard-carrying women flooded the halls outside the UVIC president's boardroom. (Strong's term is ending and the Search for the President Committee was meeting to review his conduct and renegotiate his contract.)*

The women on the march offered an oral submission to the Search for President Committee (through the loud hailer), reiterating demands from UVIC Faculty Women's Caucus, Students' Society, and Graduate Women's Caucus for the termination of Strong's reign.

Since then, four of the eight tenured male faculty members at UVIC's Political Science Department have filed a libel suit in the BC Supreme Court against the CBC for radio broadcast interviews with Constance Backhouse and Somer Brodribb recorded during the March 11th Speak Out.

During the Speak Out, Sylvia Bardon (a Political Science graduate student and member of the Climate Committee) had made what I thought was the observation of the day: "what sexist men fear the most, is being redundant." If there is one thing which characterizes the angry memos, vicious articles, ineffectual reviews and trumped up law suits following the release of UVIC's Climate Report, it is redundancy. "Put up and shut up" is the message being sent. The women at UVIC and other BC campuses are doing neither.

* During the Summit of 1994, Dr. David Strong was reappointed to the position of President and Vice Chancellor of UVIC despite major opposition from students, staff and faculty.♀

Drunk Defense Offensive

by Jen Saunders

Are we to accept that alcohol is a terrible evil that takes over men's minds and bodies, or that rape is natural for men but some manage to restrain themselves? Or should we stop giving them excuses and start making men take responsibility for their actions?

Being drunk can now be used as a legal defence. On September 30th, Henri Daviault was acquitted of a rape because he *may not have known what he was doing*. Six of the nine Canadian Supreme Court Judges decided that convicting Henri Daviault of assault would violate his rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because he was drunk.

I assume women are now expected to lengthen our list of 'activities to avoid'. Don't walk alone at night. Don't wear "provocative" clothing. Don't have any sexual relations with men unless you intend to let it go as far as he wants. And now watch out for bars, house parties, and family picnics because we know that either alcohol is evil, or men are brutal rapists by nature and alcohol breaks down any of those inhibitions that they have so kindly put on themselves.

The public was assured that this drinking defense would only work in the rarest of cases, and yes it has not succeeded each time it has been tried. A drugstore robber attempted to use the drunk defense but it failed because, according to the judge, "[it] would be inviting anar-

chy from society" if being drunk could free someone of charges of theft in a drugstore. It's disgustingly unironic, however, that in the two months since Henri Daviault's acquittal, three men have successfully used the influence of alcohol or drugs to excuse their attacks on women. One of their trials took one day; another, three hours.

A woman in Alberta whose husband assaulted and threatened to kill her, a woman in Quebec whose roommate/boyfriend assaulted and threatened to kill her, and a woman in P.E.I. who was sexually assaulted, are supposed to fear and fight alcohol and not the men who attacked them.

"You have to prove that he was sober enough to know what he was doing."

It is already incredibly rare for a woman to report an assault. According to Catherine Hedlin of Edmonton's Sexual Assault Centre, the rate is about 6%. It is often dangerous and always frightening to report an assault. It is very difficult for women to get past all the conditioning and myths that have us feeling responsible for any violation committed against us. It takes a huge amount of strength and conviction to bring a man to court after he has assaulted you. And now, not only do you have to charge him, prove you were assaulted, and prove he did it, but, in order to have him convicted of assault, you have to prove that he was sober enough to *know what he was doing*.♀

ONE DAY ALL IT WILL TAKE IS FIVE MINUTES

The cleancut government worker who buys porn at the corner store.

The scuzzbag who masturbates outside my girlfriend's window, tapping first to ensure her attention.

The crazy old man who followed me home from work late last night mumbling viciously at me under his breath, 'whore'.

My last boyfriend who said no one would ever love me again because I was 'so fucking stupid'.

Getting the picture, seeing the resemblance, noticing a connection? You should, all it takes is uncovering your life.

There is no such thing as an 'isolated incident'. They know what is going on. Destruction of this magnitude and scope takes planning. Careful preparation. Whether it is willingly admitted, or not.

But one day, all it's gonna take is five minutes. One day, for five minutes all womyn will look at that man, and really see HIM and then he will crumble.

It is our (re)building which continues...

JACQUELINE CRUMMEY

then I could relax

Against the Uni

On April 15, 1994 four political science professors at the University of Victoria filed a libel suit against the CBC following interviews with women about systemic discrimination at the university. The CBC broadcasts, alleged the professors were defamatory because "they conveyed to the public affirmation of the imputation...that female students and faculty members were being discriminated against by the male members of the University of Victoria's Political Science department."

The suit against the CBC is one of the most recent events in an academic battle taking place at the University of Victoria and other campuses in Canada, in which women's equality is being pitted against academic freedom. Known more commonly as the debate on 'political correctness' or the backlash against the women's movement, the battle at the University of Victoria erupted after a 19-page report on discrimination against women was presented to the Political Science department in the spring of 1993.

The professors allege that the CBC defamed them by broadcasting interviews with Somer Brodribb, chair of the committee that produced the report and law professor Constance Backhouse, whose report on sexism at the University of Western Ontario in London was also negatively released in 1988.

Well-known feminist theorist Dr. Somer Brodribb, a professor in the Political Science department, was chosen to chair the committee in the spring of 1992. Originally called The Committee to Make the Department More Supportive to Women, the committee was given a mandate to address the 'climate' of learn-

ing for women in the department, with special emphasis on systemic barriers encountered by women students. Five female students - Theresa Newhouse, Nadia Kyba, and Denise McCabe, and graduate students Sylvia Bardon and Phyllis Foden joined Brodribb on the committee.

Among the students' complaints were reports that feminist scholarship was often marginalized or excluded from courses altogether; that profes-

"Their 'due process' processes women. It silences, isolates and contains women's speech."

sors did not interrupt men who dominate seminar discussions, but blocked discussions between women, especially when the discussion focused on feminism; that sexist humour was used as a classroom device; that male faculty members made sexual advances to female students at social gatherings; and that disparaging comments were made about feminists. For example, students heard professors referring to "feminist imperialists" and comments like "I'm not going to be evaluated by the feminist police."

The committee presented its preliminary report in March 1993. The chilly climate report. As it soon came to be known, was similar in its findings to those written by women on other Canadian campuses. Based on discussions with, and letters from, students in the department, the report recommended 34 changes to address systemic discrimination and create a more inclusive learning environment. The report included recommendations on teaching practices, the hiring and promotion of faculty, curricula issues and funding for

women students.

One week after the committee submitted its report, all of the tenured faculty in the department, eight men, wrote a letter to the Chair of the committee demanding that she provide "credible evidence" for references to sexual harassment contained in the report or else they would require "an unqualified apology and retraction."

If neither the evidence (names of students and professors involved) nor an apology were forthcoming, the letter warned, "it will be necessary for us to take further steps to protect our reputations."

Much has been made of this letter and for good reason: It reframes a discussion of systemic discrimination in apolitical terms - as though, unrelated 'incidents' happened - or perhaps didn't happen, to individuals who are all more or less equal in the power they wield in academia.

Importantly, the professors' letter also ignores the bulk of the report, choosing instead to dwell on its most sensational aspect: sexual harassment. In their view, statements about sexual harassment are accusations that damage their own professional reputations, although no individual professors were mentioned and the report talks in general terms only about harassment experienced.

One wonders why the reports of harassment were felt to be more harmful to the men's reputations than, for example, excluding writing by women from required reading lists. The chilly climate report doesn't accord special status to its section on harassment, which is appropriately called Sexual Harassment and Everyday Hostility. However the men's fixation on the 300

words that make up this section has succeeded in stalling the discussion of systemic discrimination in the department, turning it into a debate about whether false accusations were made against innocent men.

"Credible evidence," the letter further supposes, will lay blame on the proper culprits and presumably exonerate the rest who have never been sexist, and are therefore innocent. But the key point of systemic discrimination is that it doesn't scapegoat one or two people's 'bad' behaviour, but looks at the whole picture: decision-making, power and privilege and the acquisition of knowledge. The committee refuses to apologize for or withdraw sections of their collectively-written report.

After the impasse within the department became widely known, which took about a week, the university administration got involved. University Vice-President Academic Sam Scully appointed two investigators from outside the department to review what had happened and make suggestions about how to resolve the dispute. Marilyn Callahan from the School of Social Work and Andrew Pirie from the Faculty of Law wrote a brief summary of the events that occurred in the month following the release of the chilly climate report. They made 14 recommendations that they thought would address the concerns of faculty, students, and staff within the Political Science department and on campus in general.

Callahan and Pirie's report is an attempt to address the interests of those in conflict, without denying the systemic inequalities that create differences in power among them. The first two recommendations state that the male professors' letter to Brodribb was inappropriate and that it should be withdrawn. They go on to recommend that the chilly climate committee should continue its work as originally planned and that the department should follow up with a mediator until it is "on an even keel."

Two weeks after Callahan and Pirie gave their review, Scully issued a vaguely-worded memo that seemed to suggest that he would not implement the Callahan-Pirie recommendations. At the end of the memo, he recommended that the male faculty withdraw the letter, but he also urged the committee to first withdraw the report which the male professors objected to, not at all what Callahan and Pirie recommended.

When shown the systemic power they have not recognized before, men often don't

The Backlash on Campus

Ellen Travis (reprinted with permission of author. Horizons Fall 1994)

...When the moon was full and the river calm, I set out in a small craft for Hisland, the adventures hereinafter recounted being absolutely true.

Day One. My arrival naturally having created quite a stir, I was nevertheless greeted with as much cordiality as curiosity and was pressed to tell, in every detail, of my long journey to this place.

Day Two...after much difficult translation, I came to understand that a man had alleged that he had been killed during the night. And only with the utmost patience did I come to understand further that he was accusing me of his murder.

Day Three...despite my poor amazement, my accuser then rose up again to insist that he had died, and was not the same person he had been before my arrival on Hisland."

Day Four. I was given to understand that one of the Menfolk elders would act as my counsel. "Dearest one," he said, "Dry your tears. If you are, as you believe, innocent, rely on the justice of our laws, and the activity with which I shall prevent the slightest shadow of partiality."

-from Patricia J. Williams, "A Rare Case Study of Muleheadedness and Men"

Every tool is a weapon

niversity Chill

recognize themselves. Speaking specifically of sex discrimination from a male point of view, the problem doesn't exist until women complain about it. French writer Monique Wittig has said that, for men, "as long as there is no women's struggle, there is no conflict between men and women."

Phyllis Foden, a committee member, calls the response to the report a "smoke and mirrors game." But the game itself is a form of harassment as well. Jennifer Spencer, a committee supporter, puts it this way, "Their 'due process' processes women. It silences, isolates, and contains women's speech."

For women, the problem exists long before we finally speak of it. Before it exists in our consciousness, it exists in the jobs, scholarships, and grants not received; in the collegial respect not shown; in the loss of intellectual relationships with women whose work was never on assigned reading lists; in the inexorable certainty that conversations, no matter how academic they begin, commonly get around to the shape of one's legs and the colour of one's hair.

Feminist lawyer Sheila McIntyre was intimidated, harassed and verbally attacked for her feminist perspectives during her first year teaching law at Queen's University in London. Hired in 1985 on a two-year contract, she wrote a 16-page memo to her colleagues at the end of her first year, documenting the harassment she experienced.

McIntyre reported that several male students told her that using inclusive language was "shoving her politics down their throats." In one class, six male students planned to "take a run at Sheila." McIntyre said the students "belligerently tried to prevent students who disagreed with their position from speaking, by a combination of insult, interruption, hostile gestures, and increasingly voluble but untenable argument." McIntyre was also depicted pornographically in the male students' washroom. At one point, two women students in her class told McIntyre that they "no longer felt it safe to speak" and one of the women wanted to quit law school. Over the course of the year, McIntyre had at least two dozen visits from women students who found remarks (including sexual jokes) made in class by male professors to be sexist and offensive and who had been trivialized for raising gender issues in class. McIntyre says she was visited by a male colleague, who told

her that she was "coming on too strong around here" and accused her of being "non-collegial" for disagreeing with him at a faculty meeting. Other colleagues, McIntyre said, "repeatedly interpreted" her experiences for her, explaining them as having nothing to do with sexism.

Although McIntyre didn't make recommendations to eliminate systemic discrimination and harassment, her documentation is similar in the description of incidents outlined at the University of Victoria. So is the backlash she experienced.

Backlash at the university of Victoria came in many forms. It was argued that making nondiscriminatory teaching practices one factor in awarding pay raises or promotions threatened professors' academic freedom. There were also personal attacks and accusations that the report amounted to McCarthyism and fascism. One of the professors, Warren Magnussen, described the climate report as "aimed at the creation of a religious cult, with its prophet and its goddess, and its mass of cult-followers doing their leader's bidding."

Equity in the department will not be achieved by simply adding on courses on sex, race and other forms of discrimination, the chilly climate report concluded. Discrimination should no longer be a "special topic" within political science, but should be acknowledged as a fundamental feature of a discipline dedicated to the study of power, which, after all, is what political science is all about. The more compelling reason is that there is no such thing as neutral knowledge. Knowledge reflects the distribution of social power in our society and institutions: the privilege of the white, heterosexual, affluent man is so pervasive in his experience of what knowledge is, that it wouldn't seem to him to have anything to do with his race, sexuality, class, or sex.

Very few of the recommendations in the chilly climate report would leave the choice to discriminate open and this is perhaps what makes them so controversial and threatening. Liberal-minded men, as a rule, don't mind being "challenged," but they get very upset when their choices are restricted. A "challenge" to change is relatively easy to swallow, since it presents an argument and lets you make up your own mind. The chilly climate report is no mere "challenge to change" in this sense; it seeks to alter the unstated yet accepted belief that choice and freedom have nothing to do with privilege or

power.

The chilly climate committee maintains that its report is not defamatory and the CBC maintains that its broadcasts were not libellous. But what about the charge that the men have not been presented as they perceive themselves? This is true. The report presents the male professors as implicated in a context they deny the existence of. This becomes confusing. On one hand, they have acknowledged that systemic discrimination and sexism exist, and on the other hand they want to identify which individuals are guilty of sexual harassment. One minute we are talking about systemic patterns that shape male identities, regular guys and lechers alike, and the next

"It doesn't matter how the hell you say it, they just don't want to hear it."

minute we are talking about sexism as if it were an individual characteristic that some men have and some don't. This inability to hold on to the concept of systemic discrimination was eventually dubbed the Goldfish Memory Syndrome by committee member Theresa Newhouse. The shift occurs, producing a tiresome circularity, in roughly eight seconds, or the time it takes a goldfish to swim around a bowl.

In August 1993, yet another team of investigators was appointed by Strong to review "the learning and working environment" in the Political Science department. This time he chose Saskatchewan lawyer Beth Bilson and former BC Supreme Court Judge Thomas Berger. Five months later, Berger and Bilson submitted a report which admonished the committee for using words like "sexism," "racism," and "harassment." The report says these words have flexible meanings, but "cannot be expanded or contracted according to taste," suggesting the committee chose its terms based on something as arbitrary as "taste." Bilson and Berger's report goes on to say that, "No one wishes to discount the collective experience of women."

After continued legal pressure from some of the tenured male professors, *The Globe and Mail* printed a retraction of its news stories about the chilly climate controversy. Scully wrote to the paper to say that the chilly climate committee was not an "official" committee, even though the precise terms under which the committee was created by unanimous vote of the department, are reproduced for the record in the Callahan - Pirie review.

The retraction appeared as students demanded Strong's resignation after he overturned an Equity Office judgement on a harassment case.

These stranger than fiction events begin to take on the feel of Columbia University law professor Patricia Williams' tale of a surreal journey to Hisland, quoted throughout this article. Williams' tale ends this way: "I have been most brutally betrayed. I am to be burned at the stake in the morning."

William's tale describes what happens when women and members of other marginalized groups make their experiences of discrimination public. The Berger and Bilson report holds out the promise that there is a way to say that you are being discriminated against that will not produce anger, and that there is a way to take power away without conflict occurring.

According to Sylvia Bardon, the illusion that if women could somehow "just say it the right way, everybody would get it" has been dispelled. Committee members have answered demands and warnings to be silent by continually re-asserting what they said on their original report. Brodribb calls it a lesson in "patriarchal pedagogy." She says women on campus are being encouraged to adopt a "politics of supplicancy" in which they repeatedly reformulate their experiences, to be ingratiating, to create a jovial and light-hearted atmosphere for discussion of discrimination, presumably so as not to threaten anyone or cause them to feel any discomfort are guilt.

But Phyllis Foden says the experience has taught her that, "It doesn't matter how the hell

"One wonders why the reports of harassment were felt to be more harmful to the men's reputations than, for example, excluding writing by women from required reading lists."

you say it, they just don't want to hear it."

All eight of the tenured male professors in the department continue to teach Political Science at the University of Victoria. Six months after Berger and Bilson's report recommended that a woman be brought in from outside the department, Rob Walker, one of the four men who brought the law suit, is the department's new interim chair. University President Strong was narrowly reappointed by the university's board of governors on June 20th, 1994. The

libel suit filed by four faculty members against the CBC has not yet come to trial.

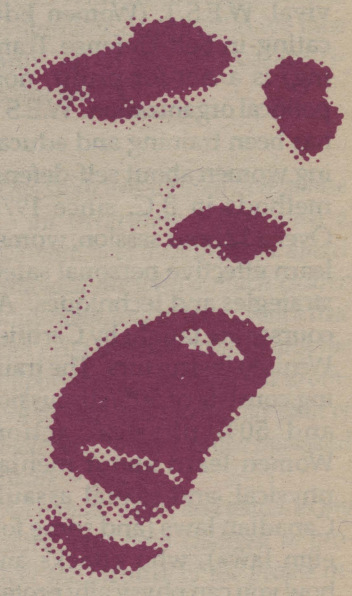
More than two and a half years since it began its work, the chilly climate committee has taken its sex discrimination complaint to the BC Human Rights Commission. Folden and Bardon are working on masters' degrees, but each of them say that they have been unable to make progress during the last year because of the work generated by the chilly climate backlash. The two committee members who graduated just after the report came out, Nadia Kyba and Denise McCabe, have both left Victoria. Theresa Newhouse switched major programs, from Political Science to Women's Studies. Somer Brodribb is still on staff at the university.

Meanwhile, no serious discussion, much less implementation, of the chilly climate committee's recommendations, has occurred in the department, nor have the recommendations of other reports since issued been put into place.

In Vancouver, the University of British Columbia has just announced an investigation into criticisms of racism and sexism in teaching practices in its Political Science department. In Manitoba, a president's advisory committee on women made the news in August with its report of pay discrimination among female faculty and a poor record for hiring women.

Regular protests on the Victoria campus remind students, faculty and administration that the conflict at the University of Victoria is clearly not over yet. The committee continues to receive support from women's groups on the University of Victoria campus, across Canada and outside Canada.

To offer support or make a donation to the Chilly Climate Support and Defence Fund, write c/o Status of Women Action Group, Box 8484, Victoria, BC V8W 3S1. ♀



n if you hold it right

you forgot to lock your door

I started off nervous and polite. Never wanting to misjudge or offend. I became afraid to walk the streets slowly or to sit alone on benches because I knew that someone, some man, would come and talk with me.

But soon I learnt to say "Fuck Off". Easily and with no guilt. I can now smile without fear of trapping myself, and I've learnt to put those "knowing" looks from older men, and worried disapproving looks from older women into perspective.

I've hitchhiked alone thousands of miles. Hearing stories; talking to strangers, sleeping in parks or in houses of people I'd just met. Once a man lent me his van for a week. He left me and his van in Barcelona with a promise that I'd bring it back to him.

One of the last rides I took was from Jaime, a Spanish truck driver who got me a free ride across the ferry to Dover one middle of the night.

I'd forgotten how I felt about him until I read my journal the other day. I forgot how much I liked him; how I was so happy that I'd met him. How we giggled and sang and told each other stories. And how I knew I'd be sad when the lift was over because he'd be another one of those 'friends for a day' and I'd miss him. And how much I trusted him and how when I first climbed up the stairs into his truck and met his huge smile he said "I'm no bad man" and I believed him. I thought I'd gotten so good at judging characters.

We got to Dover late in the middle of the night. I don't hitch at night so I did take the offer to sleep in his truck.

I got into my sleeping bag on the top bed in the bunker. I could feel him moving restlessly in the bed underneath. I must have fallen asleep because I woke up desperately trying to convince myself that I'd imagined the hand on me. The hand that bolted back down as I jumped awake.

In a little while the truck started shaking and I heard him wiping himself and then the truck was shaking again as the hand came back. I took my dull knife blade that I use for cutting tomatoes and I rested it against his fingers.

"Arrete" I said because I never knew the Spanish word for "stop" and English was my own secret language that I mumbled in. "I'm so stupid so stupid! How could I have trusted him?"

He took his hand away, stopped the shaking and said "excuse me". Relieved I told myself that he thought I was asleep. So he's just an asshole. Not really dangerous. I stayed there. Huddled in a ball. Clutching my knife. We were in a truck stop. Rows and rows of trucks with sleeping drivers. I waited.

Then he stood in front of me. Staring. Naked and wacking off. And I mumbled and I kept still. "What the hell am I going to do! Why the hell did I get myself into this?"

All my fault. All my stupidity. A belief I soon got over. But even now, while writing this, I know most people would say "boys will be boys" and Spanish women don't sleep in the trucks" and "he's in there for 15 days" and all the other bullshit excuses we give them.

He leaned over, resting his arm on the bed and I lept up and I screamed "YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE LEAVE ME ALONE!" And while screaming I went blank. Saw and felt nothing except the sound of my voice. Very angry. Very loud. He crouched down before me begging my forgiveness. Throwing me all those excuses he's been assured he can use.

And I got out. And I went to find a big rock or a big glass bottle. But I kept walking. I kept walking in the dark along the highway. One truck stopped "he-ey Madonna". And the next was a man who wanted to lecture me on how dangerous it is for me to travel. "A young girl alone".

by Jen Saunders

Play Revictimizes

by L. de la Vega & Christie Shaw

We heard about *Oleanna* a few months ago. "*Oleanna* is a play that gives great insights into harassment..." brilliant and a masterpiece, they said.

Self Defense For and By Women

By Kira Burgess

Wenlido is a women's self defense course developed by and for women. Classes are available to all women and children wanting to learn more about personal safety and survival. W.E.S.T. (Women Educating in Self-Defense Training) is a not-for-profit, non-political organization. W.E.S.T. has been training and educating women about self-defense methods in B.C. since 1975. Over a 12 hour session, women learn effective personal safety strategies and techniques. All courses are taught by Certified Wenlido Instructors. The training consists of 50% discussion and 50% physical action. Women learn about mental, physical, and sexual assault, Canadian laws (and some foreign laws), who attacks and how you can physically protect yourself.

In the first scene, I felt a sense of disgust towards both of the characters. Carol, the student, cries and whines hysterically. It is aggravating to listen to someone who does not have any verbal or social skills. She repeats, I don't understand... I don't understand... over and over again. Her manner of speaking is grating

Women are educated in AWARENESS (who the attacker really is, why they attack, what happens in attacks) AVOIDANCE (how to make your environment as safe as possible) ASSERTIVENESS (how to act and speak positively to state what you want) ASSESSMENT (you choose what you will say and do) and ACTION (what you can do to release yourself from and fend off physical attacks) *Wenlido* believes that when a woman says no, she means NO!

Wenlido is offered through the UVIC Women's Centre. There is no required fitness level. You must be at least 12 years old to attend.

Cost is \$30 for students and unwaged individuals and \$50 for waged individuals. Course dates are scheduled in January for Saturday the 14th and Sunday the 15th (10:00 am - 4:30 pm) and in February for Saturday the 4th and Saturday the 11th (10:00 am - 4:30 pm). Phone the Women's Centre at 721-8353 for registration or further information. ♀

and I do not feel sympathetic to her character even though I can understand that she is having real problems. Her problems are quite legitimate. She wants to understand the language of academia. She wants to learn.

John, the pedantic professor, treats Carol in such a condescending manner it is offensive. At times he speaks to her slowly, the way that most people speak to people with hearing impairments while at other times he indulges in a rant of intellectual masturbation. He constantly refers to her as a girl and offers to give her an A if she will come in to listen to his pathetic theorizing. He refuses to teach Carol; instead he insists on further alienating Carol. He does this by telling her it is useless to be educated. Carol cries, and John screams into the phone. The atmosphere is very tense.

In the second scene, Carol changes. All of a sudden she understands everything and is incredibly articulate. She has twisted everything which John said in the first scene, removed it from its context and claims that it is sexual harassment. The power imbalance in the first scene is reversed. Carol has complete control over John who will not receive tenure if Carol follows through with her complaint. John's house is at stake. Carol refers to "the group" which is obviously influencing the way that she thinks. "The group" told her not to meet with him. At the end of the scene Carol refuses to let up with her com-

plaint. John tries to physically restrain her from leaving. Carol screams for help.

The last scene is a repeat of the second scene, but more intense. Carol's accusations become more serious — she accuses John of attempted rape. John seems more pitiful, desperate and still insists on screaming into the phone. Carol, who is now a fanatic member of "the group" offers to give up her complaint if John bans a list of books. John becomes indignant and beats Carol. People cheer and clap. I am unsure if they are clapping because it is the end of the play or because Carol "deserves it." I was disturbed by the fact that Mamet had justified such overt violence against women, that the play encouraged this violence, that the director chose to play out such a graphically disturbing scene.

Last year I was sexually harassed by my supervisor. I was looking forward to going to this play as I had hoped *Oleanna* would answer some of my questions. However, I feel that if my harasser went to see the play he would feel vindicated. My experience is silenced.

Although the script is clever and the acting phenomenal, *Oleanna*'s message is frightening. *Oleanna* is an anti-feminist play that depicts sexual harassment as a black mailing tool employed by manipulative vengeful women. David Mamet makes no attempt to present sexual harassment as a serious issue that is faced by many female college and uni-

versity students. Rather, he depicts sexual harassment as an action attributed to nothing other than reform defined "femi-nazis".

It is obvious that David Mamet has never been close to anyone who has experienced sexual harassment. He does not try to create an understanding of what harassment is about for the victim. Instead he turns sexual harassment into an issue of power where both the harasser and the harassed are equally to blame. This is problematic. He does not take into account systematic gender inequalities that make men more privileged than women. He also ignores the inherent power imbalance that exists between professor and student. What I find most disturbing about *Oleanna*, is that Mamet wanted to create a "controversy". He wanted people to get "upset", to write angry reviews and to argue with one another. What David Mamet is not clever or compassionate enough to realize is that his words revictimize and resilience many women. ♀



Resistance is the secret of joy

Silent Violence

by Christie Shaw

the beginning

Sitting in the doctor's office when I was thirteen, I absentmindedly leafed through a Macleans' magazine which provided me with a word that would accurately describe my feelings and at the same time give me an identity that would both empower me and oppress me. In July of 1983 Maclean's had an article on Gay Pride. I read it and looked at the pictures of the women who marched through the muggy streets of Toronto to increase their visibility and celebrate their strength. I immediately identified with these women and knew that my very confused feelings around sexuality had to do with loving women instead of men...

I came out in Edmonton when I was seventeen. I was Femme. Women referred to me as 'the blond' because of my long blond hair. I liked butch women. This was not at the root of my problems but eventually, for me, the Butch/Femme relationship became a tool my girlfriends used to enhance their power over me. Eventually, I came to see lesbian relationships in terms of Butch/Femme, top/bottom dichotomies only. I was a bottom because I looked the part. Naiveté commands the attention of the 'bad apples' and in the spirit of discovering my sexuality in a world that offered me no advice or guidance I took chances. Later I was to learn that other Dykes saw me heading for trouble, but as far as they were concerned I had to make this journey on my own. After all, who helped them...

the middle

Abuse from women became a pattern in my life that started when I was eighteen and didn't end until I was twenty-four. While other women abused me, I abused myself with low self-esteem, drugs and alcohol. I was hit, kicked, shaken, intimidated, threatened, stalked, bit, scratched, choked...

For this I was given food, shelter, and sometimes clothes by the various women I was with. In May of 1989 I moved from Edmonton to Banff. I left behind the drugs and alcohol and brought with me what self-esteem I could summon up. I became more self-sufficient...

In September of 1990, a friend and I went to a seminar in Calgary. Mel and I decided to go to the bar. We met Janice. She had a nice smile. Warm, inviting and a bit dangerous.

We played pool. She was careful to manoeuvre herself so that any time she was near me she would touch some part of my body...

We stayed at her house that night. While Mel slept, Janice and I talked. The following week Janice showed up in Banff with flowers and praising words. This time it would be different...

The first time Janice and I had sex, I was nervous. I couldn't cum. Janice was irritated by this and accused me of not finding her attractive, of not wanting to be with her. She became angry and took a pitcher of water that was sitting next to the bed, threw it on me and left. I didn't see her for a week...

"...the pain, isolation and silence endured by many women who are in these relationships cannot be ignored."

The next time I saw her, we talked and she admitted to feeling very inexperienced sexually. Because of this, I had more power in the relationship. I moved to Calgary to be with her in October of 1990...

Janice participated in "Pussy Cats", a show that explored lesbian sexuality. Janice is a fairly good dancer and she did a piece that was choreographed to a song by Madonna. She was very popular dancing topless on the stage while pausing briefly to accept bills in her pants and tongues in her mouth. She enjoyed the reaction she got from the audience, the power she thought she held over the spectators...

Janice was from a small town in Northern Ontario. She was sexually abused as a child. Many nights I held her as she cried over her past, over the countless relationships she had been in with abusive men, over the shame she felt in allowing herself to be raped. She lost herself to drugs and alcohol which she later used as catalysts for expressing her anger. In many ways she needed me...

The first time I tried S&M was with Janice. I went into the experience with a certain level of excitement and a whole lot of trust. I left the experience bleeding and crawling away to the bathroom in agony, with damage to my vagina and ripped tissue around and in my rectum, soon to be scars. I have been working on the emotional scars for three years now, in time they will heal I'm sure but I'll always have physical scars to remind me of Janice. Penetrative sex is painful now...

My medical problems from that experience are worse now than if I had received treatment at the time. It wasn't an option then. I was unprepared and too ashamed to see a doctor. In the past doctors meant facing a homophobic medical system which wouldn't perform pap tests on me because Lesbians don't have intercourse and therefore don't need them. Lesbians don't get cancer, I guess...

My sense of reality began to change as I felt every ounce of self-worth drain out of me. Janice was well liked in the community. Other women wanted her. I came to believe that something would have to be wrong with me if I didn't want to hold on to her. I was afraid of being alone. The

longer I stayed with Janice the more my sense of identity dispersed. She told me I would be nothing without her. I came to believe this and started to feel my ability to survive was being tested. If she didn't love me who would? I placed a lot of my self-worth on sex. At times sex with Janice was the best I'd ever had...

the end

Janice left the city to work for Alberta Parks and Rec. I suppose being alone gave me time to think. After a month I went to visit Janice in the Kananaskis. She hadn't changed, I just saw her differently. But I still felt dependent on her. She seemed more bitter. She demanded all my attention and I wanted to please her the only way I knew how - sex. She threatened to sleep with a man she was working with. She would spend hours talking about how and why she found him attractive. I no longer felt I had a handle on my own life. I no longer wanted to deal with life, the relationship, or with trying to change it...

"Abuse from women became a pattern in my life that started when I was 18 and didn't end until I was 24."

I moved back to Banff in the summer of 1992. When Janice came back from her summer job I visited her in Calgary. We went out to the bar where she spent the entire evening drunk, puking and latching on

to women whenever I turned my back. When we left the bar I half carried her back to her apartment. She spent the twenty minute walk describing the 'good fuck' she had with Jon, the guy at work. She threw insults at me. Cunt, slut, worthless fucking dyke...

At home she passed out immediately. Before going to bed, I paused briefly to rip the shirt she had borrowed from me off her back. I went upstairs to sleep. I awoke to the blow of Janice's cowboy boot in my head. She raped me...

The next morning when I tried to leave, Janice stood in front of the door, barring my way. She spat insults at me and then began to push me, slap me. I fought back until she finally collapsed. Through her tears she yelled at me. Just get the fuck out of here...

I don't think she actually thought I would. I believe she expected me to call the next day, to make amends. I didn't. I never have. I left that fall morning and I have never gone back...

*

In retrospect, when I look at the violence I've experienced, I realize the extent to which I was isolated was severe. Where as heterosexual women who were abused by their partners had shelters they could go to, I was not taken seriously when I arrived at a shelter in Edmonton. It was a difficult decision deciding whether or not to do this interview because voicing our experiences of abuse within the Lesbian community may be seen by some as only adding fuel to homophobia. However, the pain, isolation and silence endured by many women who are in these relationships cannot be ignored. I also realized that despite everything I am more understanding of the women who have abused me than the men, because of the struggles we share. I feel strongly about making alliances with women against the systematic oppression we face until all of our voices are finally heard.

This story was written in response to an interview I had with a woman who's dauntless spirit provided me with a much clearer understanding of the violence that can exist between women and the importance of reaching out to others to stop this particular kind of violence. To her I send a thousand thank-you's...

All names, dates, and places in my story have been changed to protect the identity of the people involved.

CRASHING

THE PIECES/ OR IS IT SHARDS
OF MY MEMORIES
CHOKED AND CUT ME
IS IT YOU I SEE
HANDS RINGING MY NECK
FISTS SINKING INTO MY FLESH
ESCAPE FROM MY BODY A DESIRED SOLUTION.

UNTITLED I

The scream tears my flesh
surging/ splitting from within
is this me?
Smooth
Calm
Collected
Admired
Despised
The wild woman subsides
in your presence-why, I do not know.

UNTITLED II

I look at you
with my
split personality.
-I see you-
beautiful, strong,
loving, enviable,
admirable.
-Sides change-
I would that you were
crushed by the weight
of my rage

by Naomi North

85% of assailants are known to their victim



Defining Home

by Shelley Marie Motz

"Performance poetry falls between the cracks in this culture. It is not music, nor theatre, nor printed page, yet the oral tradition of spoken verse, of storytelling, is old and vast and very familiar in my bones. It is a place in which I find home."

In recent performances of poetry and prose, artist and performer Nicola Harwood broke from the printed page and reacquainted this writer with the power of the spoken word. Her exploration of home as a construct not only entertained. It provoked thought. It brought forth rage and sadness and fear. It illuminated power dynamics and set them amidst a familiar landscape.

Nicola Harwood is consistently locating herself within these power structures and her work is marked by urgency born of her situation as both an insider and an outsider. She is white. She is female. She is lesbian. She is an artist. She is both the powerful and the powerless.

She holds power as the descendant of white settlers, of a "senator (who) would spin in his Manitoba grave tonight/ to know that I am the type/ to side with Louis Riel/." Rooting her words firmly in the landscape and geography of British Columbia, she is painfully aware of how her situation as a white woman privileges her on "this so-called canadian soil." She admits what so many of us deny. "My white skin is always wanting more" and "I /walk away,/ don't watch/ you die."

As a white woman in our society, Nicola holds some power. She can define her situation in relation to First Nation peoples and the realities of their lives. As a white woman, I am also guilty. "I don't see what I can't let myself see." As white women we can choose to avert our eyes. Nicola acknowledges that we "learn to walk around the/ brown bodies on the sidewalk." "Who has the power of naming?" Who decides who shall be the homeless?

Her power is undermined because she is a woman. Her body and spirit beaten. Like a horse broken by cowhands, she is wild and defensive, wary. "Cuz you can't hit a horse like that/she'd never let you come back/in." She writes about escape and retreat. "Tearing back into the hills/her dapple grey rump saving my thirteen year old ass/from family and the broken glass blackmail/Billy Tazelaar and the other boys/called love."

Her power is undermined by others because she is a lesbian. But she celebrates the power and beauty in her sexuality. "The bank won't give me a mortgage because I am a sexual deviant/the bank won't give me a mortgage because I like having sex/ with sexual deviants and weird artist types who earn less money than me...the bank won't touch me with a ten foot pole."

Threaded throughout Nicola's work is an analysis of "home". What is it? How do we know when we are there?

Home might be defined as a geographical location. Nicola's words are set against Canadian, primarily British Columbian, landscapes. The geography is both constant and changing. The same soil which supported the First Nations mysteriously changes with the bestowal of a new name. It is suddenly a new land. Canadian. But the geography is also constant and familiar and comforting. In the

series' first poem, Nicola states, "when I am born/my mother names me/ after this place." In the last poem, she is comforted by her awareness that "right behind the motel/ right below my window/ the Nicola River flows."

Home has been constructed as the nuclear family but Nicola exposes how, in her experience, this home is not so much safe as it is fraught with tensions. "He's out alot. On the road. Traveling salesman. On the lake. She waits."

For members of marginalized groups, home can also be found amongst a community of similar individuals. Regarding the lesbian community, Nicola writes, "There's something I need to say about family."

One might also define home as a physical structure. "Something permanent/residence residing abiding/not moving/ every four months for the past two years."

A home. A physical dwelling. A symbol of permanence we strive for. Something to measure security by. She writes "As big as I love you/ big as a house."

Can you find home if you're an outsider? How do you know when you're there? Nicola's poems trace her personal journey but also capture the uncertainty experienced by many. They bring forth our doubts. Where/Who are we? "Thinks this place is where she is/Thinks this must be where she is/Hasn't defined exile yet."

Where has Nicola found home? Within her-self. It is contained in her personal myths, expressed through her art. "I retreat into the only thing they can't steal/I can't lose/take my piece of paper/down to the beach/re-order/record/carry it in very small packages/wear it on my body/ at all times."

Home was performed at Open Space Gallery in October, 1994. Nicola Harwood has written and performed many productions. She has featured her work in Women in View in Vancouver as well as both the Vancouver and Victoria Fringe Festivals. She has also created and performed explicitly lesbian material under the stage name Love Mitten. For five years, she was the artistic director of Theatre Energy, an alternative theatre company in the Kootenays. All of the quotations are taken from her play Home except for the first which was taken from the play's program.♀

NO! I SAID NO!

Why are these words so incomprehensible
That even a judge finds them misunderstandable?
You may have power over the act,
But my armour of flesh you will never crack.
You huff and you puff,
You slash and you bash,
And for a while it may seem as though you will win,
But to where I really am you cannot force your way in.
For though I may seem weak in many a way,
And being a woman gives me less power to say,
Ultimately it is all up to me.
For me to allow you in, Don't you see?
You may not like to risk hearing "No",
But a true man wants nothing except to show
He can earn my love, my trust, my respect,
And, most importantly of all, my consent!

Anonymous Woman

INTERESTED IN WOMEN'S CREATIVITY



A ♀ is sexually assaulted every 17 minutes.

Let this Earth Go

for Lee Maracle

The earth is running too fast, she's having too much fun. Her clouds have that bight edge too much liquor shining off the face, their silver linings pour down. Everyone is yelling.

Oh holy, holy wine, your eyes are deepest water dark, northern inlets.

You stand there with the weight, the purpose of stone.

I want you

I want you

I want you

to hold me under your weight. Pin me into the earth, squeeze a little give from this hard woman's skin. Slip a small hand in through the half open pane and unlock this door from the inside.

I see you

in the winter, in the alleys, behind our small frozen city storefronts. Your people dying, not symbolically but literally. One or two freezing to death every year. I learn to walk around the brown bodies on the sidewalk.

Since you were born, 37 members of your family have died.

Your stories weave a healing blanket that barely covers them all. A corner lifts, the words you breathe a wind that will not rest.

I follow you.

I follow a cast of wobbling shadow and light. Watch a nine year old girl jump in and out of your forty - two - year old skin. There she is again. Right behind the eyes. Lifting blankets, peering out.

Your black eyes startle my white nerves: you reach in and pull Squaw Hall out from underneath, shake it loose from between the lines of my poem. Rattle it in my face. Flesh out the image. You say. Flesh out the image.

Squaw Hall. The open air dance hall at the Williams Lake Stampede. Four walls and a floor, no roof. Dance starts at ten, goes till dawn.

More.

Child - whore, peering out from behind blankets, skirts, watches carefully the steers marked, roped and tied, shoved off to market, the women shoved into tight jeans. She hitches up her thirteen - year - old dreams. Walks out into the road. Doesn't even hear the mass of machinery, grinding gears picking up pure speed. Road. Rode. Rodeo - o - o - o

Keep dancing.

Keep dancing knee - deep in broken glass under the open sky. Black leather boots, fists and bottles fly. White yellow faces mouths yelling, red faces smashing, singing. Glass comes raining down.

At dawn people scatter to pick - ups or fall to the grass and lie there. Not moving.

I want to tell you I see knife wounds. Twisting purple bruises. Punched out teeth. Bullet holes. Women's eyes. But I don't.

I don't see what I can't let myself see

the way I

walk away

don't watch

you die.

Next year Squaw Hall burns to the ground.

Still need.

Still need. A body some nights. To take down the images. To take down the images and the real. To take down the images and the real life images I refuse to see, to feel, the ones you live and I do

not feel.

Still need some nights a body, when the girl - need has surfaced again. There she is, running out in front of cars, spinning that hardwood dance floor faster and faster.

I want you

to crawl into this bed, move your heat and weight onto me and into me. Let the weight of stone be a refuge from this flashing earth.

I want more, my white skin is always wanting more and taking am always wanting you know this.

This cedar blanket is for you, Lee. Please, take it, cover them quietly. The body will remember. You said so yourself, the body never lies.

you ram it down my throat
squeeze it into my head
breathe it into my mouth
shove it into my thoughts
I stand
feet apart hands held out
they told me this signalled
STOP in any language
any language but yours
closer and closer
your words circle around me
you seek absolution
like a caged bird seeking
freedom
but it is I who beat my wings
on the walls you have surrounded
me with
explanations apologies sugar coated
euphemisms
they pin me against steel bars
I run this way and that
trying in vain to find silence
to find safety
trying trying trying
to find refuge from you
from your voice telling me I
misunderstood
from your absolute need to
explain/apologize for what you
have done said are
from your face stricken with
WHITE GUILT
waiting for me to smooth the
feathers of your 'indisputable'
political correctness
screaming at me to tell you
you're not racist
I sink to my knees
begging you to
leave me alone
begging you to
leave me a space
for my anger
begging you to STOP
beating me with your
WHITE GUILT

Amal Ishaque Rana

~Nicola Harwood

B I L L B O A R D S

The Women's Centre Collective meets every Wednesday at 11:45 in the Women's Centre.

Interested in women's creativity? VIPIRG'S Women's Creativity Committee meets every Wednesday in the upper Sub to plan action and education around women's international art, political art, music, women's writing, corporate art and women's self - image, traditional art, and so much more...

CFUV presents Ani Difranco live at the UVIC Centre Auditorium January 14th at 8:00 pm. Tickets are available at the McPherson Box Office and all usual outlets.

Concerned about the Social Policy Review? Get involved with the Social Policy Action committee, the Strike Action committee or the Educational Awareness Research Committee. Ask in the Resource Centre, located in the Sub, for time and location of meetings.

The Emily Collective meets every Tuesday at 12:30 in the Women's Centre.

The Lesbian * Gay * Bisexual * Alliance meets on Tuesdays from 6:00 ~ 7:30pm to discuss issues and experiences as well as to make social contacts and organize events. The LGBA meets on Fridays at 12:30 to develop campaigns and strategies for political action and increased visibility/awareness. To find out where the meetings are contact Lisa at 721 ~ 3083.

The Women's Centre will be offering Wenlido courses on January 14 and 15 and again on February 4 and 11. For more information contact the Women's Centre at 721 ~ 8353.

Don't forget December 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against women. Honour their memory.

MEMORIAL VIGIL outside by the MacLaurin pyramid 11:30 ~ 12:30

OPEN HOUSE in the upper Sub. 1:00 ~ 3:00pm



DR. PIERCE'S FAVORITE PRESCRIPTION

Women! Try this way to help get relief from functional pain. Why darken your life by submitting to the penalties of functional distress... headaches, nervousness, backaches, debility, and irritability? Try taking Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription today. Devised by a physician to suit women's delicate organism, it's properties may help you to enjoy life as you will like to enjoy it in greater freedom from functional distress with a feeling of normal health and energy every day of the month. Ask your druggist today for Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. Sold in both liquid and tablet form. Get yours today!

~ The Calgary Herald.
Monday April 6, 1942